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The Response Bias Network: Investigating the Relationship Between Overclaiming Bias, Personality, and Narcissism Under Low- and Simulated High-Stakes Scenarios

Self-report remains one of the most commonly used methods for gathering information about individuals due to its simplicity and low cost. However, it is highly susceptible to biases, including faking, which involves portraying oneself more positively than one truly is. One key methodological approach to identifying faking is overclaiming—exaggerated self-reports of competence that tend to intensify in high-stakes situations. Typically, this involves asking respondents about their knowledge in a particular domain, including non-existent items (i.e., foil items). Although overclaiming shows promise as a measure of faking, its broader construct network and its relationship to both low- and high-stakes conditions remain underexplored. This study aimed to investigate the correlations among overclaiming, personality, and narcissism in both low- and high-stakes scenarios. A total of 430 university students participated in two simulations: a low-stakes setting encouraging honest responses, and a high-stakes setting mimicking a competitive internship selection process. Results revealed a consistent link between overclaiming and openness to experience in both scenarios. In the high-stakes condition, overclaiming was additionally correlated with extraversion, conscientiousness, negatively with neuroticism, and negatively with vulnerable narcissism. Individuals higher in openness may perceive significance in non-existent items, thereby elevating overclaiming regardless of the testing context. Nevertheless, the high-stakes environment appeared to amplify socially desirable trait reporting (extraversion, low neuroticism) alongside overclaiming. Moreover, the fear of exposing vulnerability associated with narcissism may encourage caution in overclaiming. These findings suggest that overclaiming operates somewhat differently depending on whether the stakes are low or high.

Oral presentation

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Abstract

Self-report remains one of the most commonly used methods for gathering information about individuals due to its simplicity and low cost. However, it is highly susceptible to biases, including faking, which involves portraying oneself more positively than one truly is. One key methodological approach to identifying faking is overclaiming—exaggerated self-reports of competence that tend to intensify in high-stakes situations. Typically, this involves asking respondents about their knowledge in a particular domain, including non-existent items (i.e., foil items). Although overclaiming shows promise as a measure of faking, its broader construct network and its relationship to both low- and high-stakes conditions remain underexplored. This study aimed to investigate the correlations among overclaiming, personality, and narcissism in both low- and high-stakes scenarios. A total of 430 university students participated in two simulations: a low-stakes setting encouraging honest responses, and a high-stakes setting mimicking a competitive internship selection process. Results revealed a consistent link between overclaiming and openness to experience in both scenarios. In the high-stakes condition, overclaiming was additionally correlated with extraversion, conscientiousness, negatively with neuroticism, and negatively with vulnerable narcissism. Individuals higher in openness may perceive significance in non-existent items, thereby elevating overclaiming regardless of the testing context. Nevertheless, the high-stakes environment appeared to amplify socially desirable trait reporting (extraversion, low

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Keywords

Overclaiming, response bias, faking, personality

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